Novel Studies

Diary of a Wimpy Kid by Jeff Kinney

I read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* mainly because I knew I could relate the book to students and it is an easy to read book which helps a lot of the English Language Learners that I will be having in class. It is about a student named Greg Heffley that is beginning his first year of school in middle school and writes about his daily adventures of school and at home in a diary-journal that his mother gave him. He agrees to write on it just in case he becomes famous one day and people have to ask him a lot of questions, then, he can just give them his journal for them to read. He writes about what he thinks of school, the jocks, and girls. He wants to be popular and runs to be treasurer of his school but does not win because he is caught fabricating lies about the other members. He also tells about his family. He has two brothers: Rodrick and Manny. Rodrick is usually playing practical jokes on him and thinks Manny is a spoiled kid. He believes his parents don’t understand him. His dad tells him to stop playing video games and to join a sports team; He joins the wrestling team at school but does not do so well. His mother insists for him to join the school play “The Wizard of Oz” which he got to be the tree and then does not want to sing his lines when it came to singing. Greg starts to throw apples at a girl he dislikes, and that turns into chaos. He also writes about his best friend Rowley. Greg is not the best of friends and sometimes he gets Rowley in trouble. One time they decided to have a haunted house event at Rowley’s parents’ basement which his friend got in trouble. Later on he realizes how great of a friend Rowley is and decides to defend him when they all blame him for the disappearance of some cheese in the basketball yard.

I like the book. It’s a funny story to which I enjoyed reading. Made me wish I could have been back in middle school (or at least that time era) and deal with all of those funny school experiences I also had back then. I like how it separates the events not by chapters but by days and months which is something that I had not seen before because I, like some of my peers in class, do not read a lot. I like how it is easy to read and know that this will be beneficial to my ELL students, but unfortunately, it does not have challenging vocabulary for the advanced ELL students. Another advantage to this book is that it has pictures almost on every single page which is great for students because as they are reading the story, they can look at the pictures to see what the story is talking about. The illustrations are like you would find in a newspaper comic strip. It’s drawn in pencil, no color, and funny. I would definitely recommend this book to a third through fifth grade audience. There are some activities below that can help students in understanding the reading.

**Prereading Activities**

*Relating the Reading to Students’ Lives--Ownership*

*Students*: Fourth grade. I chose this book mainly because I know the students in the classroom can relate to some of the daily events the main character went through. The goal of this activity is to get students interested and motivated in reading the book. I will have this question on the board: Do you think being in fourth grade has changed the way you act compared to when you were in third grade? The students will read the question, think about it, and write a response on their journals. They will get the chance to talk about what they wrote with a partner, and then they will share with the class. After that, I will introduce the book *The Diary of a Wimpy Kid* by Jeff Kinney.

*Suggesting Strategies--Differentiated*

This activity will remind the students not to forget the information that they just read. The students will write notes about a small section they have read in their journals. The book suggests that they imagine what they read, but I think it will be more beneficial for them to draw a quick sketch of what they have read. I think the drawings are important for the teacher because it makes a good assessment to see if the students have understood what they have read; this is especially good for the English Language Learners.

**During-Reading Activities**

*Reading to Students*

I think it’s important to read out loud to students. It provides a model of expressive reading. The teacher can emphasize her tone of voice on certain points in the story. She can emphasize enthusiasm or sadness, depending on the story. This way the students can still be excited and interested in the book.

*Silent Reading*

The teacher will not read the entire book to them. The students will read silently by themselves. They can spread out in the classroom wherever they feel comfortable and try to get in the zone. If they need to read a little louder just enough to hear themselves, that is also okay.

*Supported Reading*

With supporting reading, the teacher will help students understand and remember the information presented in the story. The book is not separated by chapters as it is in most books. This book is a journal and so it is separated by days, weeks, and months. The students will read a “month” section. Then, on a folded piece of paper they will place their predictions of something that Greg is thinking about doing or going to do, and then write the actual outcome of what happened on the other side of the paper. For example, in one of his journal entries, he wants to play a CD that says “parental warning advisory” that his parents do not allow him to play. On one side of the paper, the student can predict what might happen and write it on that section. Will he be able to play the CD at his house, somebody else’s house, or he will never play the CD? Then on the outcome section, he can write that Greg does get to listen to the CD at his house to which he gets in trouble. And that is one of the many situations they can predict about.

*Student Oral Reading Interaction*

The teacher will have these questions up on the board:

* Did Greg take responsibility for his and Rowley's Halloween business?   
  Why did Greg feel wronged?   
  Does he take responsibility for the Safety Patrol incident?   
  What confuses him about Rowley not wanting to hang around him?   
  How did he take responsibility for the final cheese touch incident?   
  What were the consequences? In which of these three incidents did Greg feel best about his actions? Who is responsible for your actions, even when you're doing them with someone else?

Students will get into groups and every group will have four members. They will discuss these questions after they have read the reading section aloud together. Every member has to participate in the discussion questions. When all of the members of the groups have had a chance to explain their answers, then we will discuss these questions as a class.

*Modifying the Text--Differentiated*

I think this activity is great for ELL students. Teacher will partner two students together. One student will be more advanced in English than the other. The advanced student will record the reading selection and then the beginner ELL student will listen to the tape as he is following along in the text. This is a great activity because it helps the student with the pronunciation of a word and if he is having trouble with a sentence, when he listens to it on the recorder, the message can become a lot clearer.

**Postreading Activities**

*Questioning*

Each student will write a question about anything they read in the book. They will all put their questions in a jar. They will pass the jar around and each student will get one question and they will answer it by writing it and then by sharing what they wrote.

*Discussion*

The teacher would have this question on the board for class discussion: If you did something wrong but your friend was falsely accused of what you did, what would you do? Explain with details. They will write their answers in their journals and then they will get in groups of five, each with four members, and will get to share what they wrote. After 10 minutes in their groups, they will go back to their seats and they will discuss the question as a class.

*Artistic, Graphic, and Nonverbal*

This project will be a visual project. Each student will have a partner and they will choose one thing they remember or like about the book and they will draw the scenario on a big poster. They will color it and decorate it. They will leave space at the bottom for an explanation of what they drew about.